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Mill tailings cleanup in progress

Cleanup of uranium mill tailings from Monticello Vicinity Properties is again in progress. The U.S. Department of Energy (DOE) expects to clean up 25 properties during the 1990 construction season. Ten properties have been cleaned up so far this year. The Monticello project, a Superfund site, is being remediated so it can be delisted from the National Priorities List.

To streamline the identification and removal of mill tailings from Monticello properties, DOE is using a "block" concept for the radiologic assessment surveys and for the cleanup work. All of the properties in an entire city block are being surveyed at the same time to ensure that those

with contamination in excess of EPA standards are identified in a timely and cost-effective manner.

Since much of the mill tailings contamination has been carried from the millsite by the wind, UNC Geotech, the DOE's remedial action contractor, has begun surveying the blocks closest to the millsite. Oak Ridge National Laboratory, another DOE contractor, will be surveying properties outside the outer perimeter of the potential windblown area.

The superfund program requires that all contaminated properties must be cleaned up to acceptable standards before delisting from the National Priorities List can occur. An information update providing current status of the project and outlining the "block" process was sent to more than 600 Monticello property owners in February 1990.

Recognizing the drought conditions and water restrictions that exist in Monticello, the Department of Energy is acquiring water for dust control during construction from private water sources rather than using municipal water. Trucks from the construction sites to the temporary

disposal site at the Monticello Hillside are covered and sealed to prevent inadvertent dispersion.

Over the past winter months, some additional core drilling was conducted south of the millsite area to further characterize potential permanent repository sites. The additional data was provided to the DOE, Environmental Protection Agency and the State of Utah for use in reaching a decision on the final disposition of Monticello mill tailings. The Record of Decision is expected in the fall of this year.

Monticello residents may review documents relating to the Monticello cleanup at the San Juan County Public Library. Questions concerning activities at either the Vicinity Properties or the Millsite may be sent to Peter Mygatt, Office of External Affairs, U.S. Department of Energy Grand Junction Projects Office, P.O. Box 2567, Grand Junction, Colorado, 81502. Please include a telephone number. Mygatt may also be reached at (303) 248-6015 weekdays between 8 a.m. and 4:30 p.m.

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